

Amendments To The Claims:

Please amend the claims as shown.

1 – 10 (canceled)

11. (new) A method for determining a phase of an internal combustion engine, comprising:

determining an initial phase angle of a camshaft of the engine;

adjusting the phase angle of the camshaft by a phase adjusting device;

identifying a reflux of gas from an outlet zone into an intake zone of the engine;

terminating the camshaft adjustment once exhaust gas reflux has been identified;

determining the adjusted phase angle of the camshaft;

determining a correction value of the phase angle as a function of the initial phase angle and the adjusted phase angle; and

correcting the adjusted phase angle by the correction value for subsequent engine operation.

12. (new) The method as claimed in claim 11, wherein the reflux of gas is identified as a function of an intake pipe pressure.

13. (new) The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the reflux of gas is identified when an intake pipe pressure exceeds a predetermined intake pipe pressure value associated with a predetermined operating condition of the engine.

14. (new) The method as claimed in claim 13, wherein the reflux of gas is identified when an amplitude of a position of the intake pipe pressure exceeds a predetermined pulsation threshold value.

15. (new) The method as claimed in claim 11, wherein the reflux of gas is identified as a function of an intake zone gas temperature.

16. (new) The method as claimed in claim 15, wherein the reflux of gas is identified when the temperature of the gas in the intake zone exceeds a predetermined temperature value.

17. (new) The method as claimed in claim 11, wherein the reflux of gas is identified as a function of a temperature of the outlet zone gas when the detected temperature of the outlet zone gas changes from a determined value representative of the absence of exhaust gases to a second determined value representative of the presence of exhaust gases during an operating state of the internal combustion engine when fuel is not fed in.

18. (new) The method as claimed in claim 17, wherein the reflux of gas is identified when the temperature of the outlet zone gas exceeds a predetermined second temperature value.

19. (new) The method as claimed in claim 18, wherein a gas type sensor is provided in the exhaust gas zone that produces a measurement signal representative of the presence or absence of exhaust gases in the region of the gas type sensor.

20. (new) A device for determining a phase of an internal combustion engine having an intake zone, and outlet zone, a crankshaft, a camshaft and gas exchange valves actuated by the camshaft, comprising:

- a camshaft phase angle sensor that determines a phase angle of the camshaft relative to the crankshaft position and outputs a determined phase angle;

- a camshaft phase angle adjusting device that adjusts the phase angle of the camshaft relative to the crankshaft;

- a controller connected to the phase angle sensor and phase angle adjusting device that:
 - receives the determined phase angle from the phase angle sensor,
 - activates the phase angle adjusting device until a reflux of gas from the outlet zone into the intake zone is identified,

- determines a phase angle correction value as a function of the determined phase and a predetermined default phase angle, and

- corrects the determined phase angle as a function of the correction value for subsequent operation of the engine.

21. (new) A method for determining a phase of an internal combustion engine, comprising:

determining an initial phase angle of a camshaft of the engine;
adjusting the phase angle of the camshaft by a phase adjusting device;
identifying a reflux of gas from an outlet zone into an intake zone of the engine; and
terminating the camshaft adjustment once exhaust gas reflux has been identified.

22. (new) The method as claimed in claim 21, further comprising determining the adjusted phase angle of the camshaft.

23. (new) The method as claimed in claim 22, further comprising determining a correction value of the phase angle as a function of the initial phase angle and the adjusted phase angle.

24. (new) (new) The method as claimed in claim 23, further comprising correcting the adjusted phase angle by the correction value for subsequent engine operation.